

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for manufacturing an electron  
emission element comprising between its electrodes a  
conductive film having an electron emission section,  
5 the method comprising the steps of  
forming a gap in the conductive film located  
between the electrodes, and  
applying a voltage between the electrodes in an  
atmosphere that has an aromatic compound with a  
10 polarity or a polar group and in which the partial  
pressure ratio of water to the aromatic compound is 100  
or less.

2. The method for manufacturing an electron  
15 emission element according to claim 1 wherein the  
partial pressure ratio of water to said aromatic  
compound is 10 or less.

3. The method for manufacturing an electron  
20 emission element according to claim 1 wherein the  
partial pressure ratio of water to said aromatic  
compound is 0.1 or less.

4. The method for manufacturing an electron  
25 emission element according to claim 1 wherein the  
partial pressure ratio of water to said aromatic  
compound is 0.001 or less.

5. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to any one of claim 1 to 4 wherein said aromatic compound has a cyano group.

5           6. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to any one of claim 1 to 4 wherein said aromatic compound is benzonitrile or p-tolunitrile.

10           7. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element comprising between its electrodes a conductive film having an electron emission section, the method comprising the steps of  
              forming a gap in the conductive film located  
15           between the electrodes, and  
              applying a voltage between the electrodes in an atmosphere of an aromatic compound that has a polarity or a polar group and from which moisture has been removed.

20           8. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to claim 7 wherein said aromatic compound has a cyano group.

25           9. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to claim 7 wherein said aromatic compound is benzonitrile or p-tolunitrile.

10. A method for manufacturing an electron emission element comprising between its electrodes a conductive film having an electron emission section, the method comprising the steps of

5 forming a gap in the conductive film located between the electrodes, and

applying a voltage between the electrodes in a chamber from which moisture has been removed, in an atmosphere of an aromatic compound having a polarity or  
10 a polar group.

11. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to claim 10 wherein said aromatic compound has a cyano group.

12. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to claim 10 wherein said aromatic compound is benzonitrile or p-tolunitrile.

13. The method for manufacturing an electron emission element according to any of claims 1 to 12 wherein said electron emission element is a surface conduction electron emission element.

14. The method for manufacturing an electron source comprising a substrate and a plurality of electron emission elements arranged thereon wherein

said electron emission elements are manufactured using  
a method according to any of claims 1 to 13.

15. The method for manufacturing an image forming  
5 apparatus comprising an electron source including a  
substrate and a plurality of electron emission elements  
arranged thereon; and an image forming member for  
forming images using electron irradiation from the  
electron source wherein said electron emission elements  
10 are manufactured using a method according to any of  
claims 1 to 13.

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